

Saturday May 11th

We finally made it to the weekend! On Saturday we had some free time to enjoy ourselves, and that we did! In the morning we travelled from Wanganui to New Plymouth- a long relaxing drive. In New Plymouth we stopped along the coast to talk for a few minutes about oil, gas and methanol production in NZ. We discussed the Teranaki, which is New Zealand's only producing basin with onshore and offshore gas and oil fields. The majority of the fields produce mostly gas with some oil and condensate. While over 400 wells have been drilled, the Teranaki remains somewhat underexplored and has considerable potential for further discoveries.

Next, we talked about Stratford Power Station. This 575 MW power station owned by Contact Energy comprises 1 combined cycle unit and 2 open cycle gas turbine units. Stratford became a peaker plant in 2009 when the 200 additional MWs of generation were added. This plant is critical to maintaining energy supply to New Zealand when hydro and wind cannot meet the peak demand. Since it was quite windy, we kept our discussion short and sweet and soon headed downtown for some food. After eating, we landed ourselves in a green patch of grass- perfect for a round of soccer! A nearby playground was also utilized. Since we were along the coast, the views were breathtaking and we spent some time just relaxing along the rocky beaches. Derek even took a nap next to a bench





At last we got back into our “party” vans and headed to our hostel for the night. Check in wasn’t until 5 pm so we still had some time to kill. Jonathan asked if anyone wanted to drive out to the volcano to take some pictures so Alyssa and I decided to go with him. We took some great shots and saw some diverse landscapes. Rolling hills, tropical trees, mountains, coastline and the snow-covered volcano were all within view! We had some difficulty finding our way back, but when we did everyone was out in the field playing soccer again. We quickly joined in and ended up also participating in yoga, stretching, and racing! It was a lovely day.



When we felt our stomachs growling after all an active day we went to the grocery store to stock up for the night. We got some great feta cheese and a Merlot wine. Back at the hostel we made a big pasta dinner, ate our cheese and drank our wine. We also shared a New Zealand fruit called kiwiana. I didn’t care for it too much, but it sort of tasted like a kiwi mixed with a grapefruit. We spent the rest of the evening in, listening to music, playing games, and talking about our adventures thus far. Jonathon got really into his music, which I believe was the most entertaining for us all.